3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

In the middle of the day the sun found its way through the leaves and struck this bank, and the women liked to wade out to it and do their washing there. When the river was as low as this you could wade all the way across, if you knew where to step, but at other times a huge fallen tree was used as a bridge.

On the far side the ground rose sharply, and though at first the forest was still open and friendly, as soon as you reached the top of the rise it became thick and closed in around you, and the only paths were those made by animals, narrow and twisting.

Kenge showed me all this with his chest puffed up with pride. He told me I could drink water from any of the streams or from the Lelo itself; it was not like living in the village where both the food and water were dirty. He showed where the women would bathe, and warned me to keep upstream of the shingle bar, so as not to offend them. The other youths had already stripped naked and were splashing in the water, unashamed, though in deference to an over-clad Westerner they held their hands in front of them when they turned to face me.

We went back to the campsite and Kenge started clearing the ground. Very shortly afterward three of the great hunters arrived— Njobo, the killer of elephants; Masisi, the proud father; and Manyalibo, the gruff, good-humored conservative. They shouted a greeting as they came into the clearing, and looking around they threw down their hunting nets where they thought they would like to have their houses built. Njobo chose to be just to the south of the hillock; Manyalibo and Masisi, good cousins that they were, put their nets down beside each other, opposite. Then almost immediately they disappeared into the forest, each in a different direction, each with bow and arrows. In less than fifteen minutes Kenge, who had been examining the tracks of a huge buffalo that had passed by the night before, suddenly stood still and motioned me to be quiet. With his hands he mimed an antelope running and pointed into the forest behind Manyalibo's chosen site.